

Home Circle.

THE LOST KISS.

I put by the half-written poem,
While the pen idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on—"Had I words to complete it,
Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
But the little bare feet on the stairway,
And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,
And the eerie-low lisp on the silence,
Cry up to me over it all.

So I gather it up where was broken
The tear-faded thread of my theme,
Telling how, as one night I sat writing,
A fairy broke in on my dream.
A little inquisitive fairy—
My own little girl, with the gold
Of the sun in her hair, and the dewy
Blue eyes of the fairies of old.

'Twas the dear little girl that I scolded—
"For was it a moment like this."
I said, "when she knew I was busy,
To come romping in for a kiss?—
Came rowdying up from her mother,
And clamoring there on my knee
For 'one 'ittle kiss for my dolly,
And one 'ittle uzzer for me!"

God pity the heart that repelled her,
And the cold hand that turned her away!
And take from the lips that denied her,
This answerless prayer of to-day!
Take Lord, from my memory forever
That pitiful sob of despair,
And the patter and trip of the little bare feet,
And the one piercing cry on the stair!

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—James Whitcomb Riley.

MEN WHO WEAR ARMOR.

From 1885 to the time of his death Alexander III. never appeared outside of his bedroom without a fine steel suit of mail, which would protect his body, back and front, between his collar bone and his loins, from the dagger of the assassin. Excepting his wife and valet nobody has seen his suit of mail, says the Presbyterian, as it was worn between the underclothes and uniform; but the czar's unwillingness to go even to a cabinet council without it was an open secret in all the courts of Europe.

Bismarck at one time wore such a coat, as did also Stambouloff and Crispi. The Italian premier, indeed, still wears, for protection from the bullet and knife, a lit-shirt of mail of double thickness over the heart. None of these men, however, resorted to such precaution until repeated attempts at assassination had been made. True it is that "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Nicholas II., of Russia, has waited for

no such attempts on his life. Ever since the last arrests of Nihilist students at Odessa he has worn a shirt of nickel and steel, onerous as the garment must be to a man of his inferior physique and lethargic habits.

Still stranger stories of his fear and caution have penetrated the walls of the imperial palace and gained credence among the people of his capital. Altho no dagger has been laid on his pillow to unnerve him, and no warning of death has been put under his dinner plate to plague him, the czar never visits his dinner table or bed without the company of a trusted attendant. At every door of the dining room and bedchamber stands a Cossack guard day and night, and from every dish that is served a special watcher must eat a mouthful before it is served, to prevent any chance of poisoning.—*Sunday Afternoon.*

WAS HE TRUTHFUL.

Roger was deeply interested in his arithmetic. He had begun working as soon as he came home, not even stopping to make a visit to the pantry. His pencil seemed to be running a race with the sewing machine, which kept up a busy hum. Suddenly something snapped, and the machine stopped.

"There! I've broken my needle, and it is the last one I have in the house. Roger, can't you run to the store and get me one?"

"O mamma, must you have it? I have not a single minute to spare," said Roger.

"I can work on something else if you have not time to go," replied his mother.

Roger's pencil worked on noisily for a few minutes, when some one knocked.

"Is Roger at home?" said an eager voice. "Oh, say, the bows and arrows have come! Can't you go down to see them."

Roger threw down his pencil, seized his hat, and was off. He did not return until tea-time.

"Now for arithmetic," he said, when the table was cleared and the lamp placed upon it, with the daily paper. "Hallo! here's the new magazine. I must read the continued story. I guess I will have time for that."

But somehow the story was very long, or else one story led on to another, for when Roger at last tossed the book aside he found the evening almost gone. He glanced at the clock, and rapidly counted the leaves. "Oh, dear! I can't do half as much as I planned," he said. "I am so tired I can't think."

The next day the teacher was surprised that Roger had done so little, and when

she asked the reason he said he had done all he had time for.

Was this truthful? Was it right?—*Child's Hour.*

LITTLE SOBER-FACE.

"Mamma put me in the corner this morning.

"What do you guess it was for?"

"Aunt Lucy came with her sleigh and the horses and the bells, and I wanted to go and take a ride with her. But mamma said I couldn't, because I had such a cold.

"What do you think I did then? I lay down on the floor and screamed and kicked. Mamma looked so sorry. She took me up and put me in the corner, and said, 'You must stay there fifteen minutes, and if you are not good then, you must stay still longer.'

"You don't know how dreadful long fifteen minutes are. They are as long as 'most all day, I think. I was good very soon, 'cause I was ashamed of being so naughty.

"When I came out mamma told me to go and look in the glass.

"I did. You don't know how queer I looked. My eyes were all red and my lips were pouty.

"Mamma says God makes little faces to be bright and sweet, instead of looking so. She says little mouths are for pleasant words and smiles, and little cheeks for dimples.

"She says that when a little face gets cross it makes everyone in the house feel unpleasant, but that when it is bright it is just like sunshine.

"I'm going to try to keep my face bright. Don't you think you had better try it too?"—*S. D., In Reformed Church Messenger.*

PROUD OF A PATCH.

A poor boy with a large patch on one knee of his trousers was laughed at by a schoolmate, who called him "Old Patch."

"Why don't you fight him?" cried one of the boys. "I'd give it to him if he called me so."

"Oh," said the boy, "you don't suppose I'm ashamed of my patch, do you? For my part I'm thankful for a good mother to keep me out of rags. I'm proud of the patch for her sake."

A patch is better than a hole, and patched garments which are paid for are more comfortable than new ones which make a man afraid to meet his tailor.—*Sunday-school Advocate.*

"There is nothing in the universe that I fear, except that I may not know my duty, or fail to do in."—Mary Lyon.